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8. — *History of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands*, by JAMES JACKSON JARVES, Member of the Oriental Society. Boston: Tappan and Dennet. 1843. 8vo. pp. 407.

THE author of this work is an American, who has had the advantage of a long residence in the country the history of which he has written, and the greater advantage of such a slight connexion with the conflicting parties there, that it could not prejudice his judgment of their measures. The subject which he treats must be somewhat familiar to most of our readers ; for it is not long since Cook's Voyages held a kind of rivalry with Robinson Crusoe, in the love of the young ; and any one, who was a school-boy ten years ago, will recollect Owhyhee as readily as his village play-ground. The changes, however, which have taken place in the Sandwich Islands since the visit of the *Discovery* and *Resolution*, give a greater importance to a description of that little group, than it could gain even from the recollection of the favorite book of our school-days. American commerce has made resting-places of its ports, and our missionaries have had so large a share in the civilization, and indirectly in the government, of the inhabitants, that we are naturally anxious to examine the effects of their teaching from other points of view than a religious one. The accounts, which have hitherto been published, are not altogether satisfactory, being either statistical summaries, or the meagre journals of travellers. Mr. Jarves has undertaken to supply the deficiencies of these partial descriptions by compiling, partly from the narratives of others, partly from his personal knowledge, a political history of the Hawaiian nation. He reserves for an additional volume the portraiture of the present manners of the people, and a fuller account of the natural features of the islands.

His book bears many signs of diligence in collecting materials, and he appears to have used them with judgment. The details, which he gives of the intrigues and petty quarrels of the chief personages in this microcosm of a hundred thousand inhabitants, are singularly minute for a country without any records except songs and traditions. The interior of the Hawaiian court, it would seem, is not so much closed to vulgar eyes, as those of more civilized countries. The style which Mr. Jarves has chosen is formal, and sometimes declamatory. A young writer is apt to imagine, that studied periods and a sententious manner are necessary to maintain the dignity of history ; but a simpler mode of writing would have freed this book from a certain stiffness which encumbers it. The language, however, in spite of a little overstraining in a few pas-

sages, is clear and energetic ; the introductory chapters, especially, are excellent specimens of descriptive writing.

With respect to the historical portion itself, it seems to be founded, in the main, on native authorities, and represents the conduct of the inhabitants in a more favorable light, than that through which foreigners have hitherto been inclined to view it. Savage tribes, indeed, have been too often excluded from a share in the composition of their own history, and we owe it at least to compassion for the weaker party to hear their side of the question. There is little danger, that any person of a refined mind will be hurried by his feelings too far in the defence of men, whose habits and disposition must often disgust him ; and Mr. Jarves studiously preserves his impartiality by balancing the social vices of the people of the Sandwich Islands against the nobleness and intelligence of a few of their chiefs. One portion of his book is not so free from the appearance, at least, of partisanship. There have been some unfortunate contentions between the English and French consuls and the American missionaries ; and, in speaking of these, our author uses at times a bitterness of expression, with which his readers, at a distance from the scene of these transactions, cannot wholly sympathize. It is very natural, that one, who has himself witnessed grievous wrongs, should write about them warmly and freely ; still, Mr. Jarvis would have done well to consider, whether greater calmness might not have increased the effect of his exposures. These faults of style are easily corrected, and we have noted them the more frankly, because they are all which we have been able to detect. The events in his narrative are well grouped, and the principal characters firmly and consistently drawn. There is much, also, suggestive of new ideas to any one of a speculative mind, in his sketches of the rapid civilization of the people of this small cluster of islands, — of the working of their feudal system and constitutional monarchy, and of the management of their House of Representatives and their double Executive.

Some recent occurrences, which the author could scarcely have anticipated, have given a graver interest to the subject of his work, by connecting the fate of the Sandwich Islands with questions of international policy ; and we regret, on that account, that we are not able to notice it more fully. Its literary merits, however, apart from the political importance of the information which it contains, will gain for it many readers.